

Grabbe

'I knew she had been murdered'

Crime + Criminals (W.V.)
Community Affairs File
Grabbe, Fred

Son fingers father in death

18 NOV 9 1984

By Patrick J. Barnes
Tribune-Star Staff Reporter

The three-year search for Charlotte Grabbe, missing from her rural Marshall, Ill. farm, ended Thursday with the issuance of murder warrants for two people.

Jeff Grabbe, son of the missing woman, during an interview two years ago, blamed his father for the murder. Indiana and Illinois authorities on Thursday were searching for Grabbe's estranged husband, Fred, who is charged with murder.

"I never once believed that Mom was just missing — I knew she had

been killed," Grabbe said two years ago.

Grabbe said that he went to check on his mother the day she disappeared, July 24, 1981, but couldn't find her.

"Mom was in the field spraying beans. She didn't return to the house and I went to check on her. I couldn't find anything," Grabbe said.

Grabbe's automobile was found by Terre Haute police in the parking lot of Virgio's Tavern, 2330 S. 13th St., three days after the woman was reported missing.

Grabbe said that he and his sister, Jennie, appeared before a Clark County grand jury session after his mother disappeared.

Also appearing before that grand jury was Fred Grabbe and his purported girlfriend, Vickie McCallister, who is now in custody for murder.

Jeff Grabbe said his mother's disappearance was "whitewashed" because of his father's friendship with law-enforcement officials. That charge brought a strong denial at the time by Clark County Sheriff Jim Thompson. He said that investigators were doing all in their power to solve the case, but most of the evidence was just hearsay.

Jeff Grabbe blamed the death of his mother on money and property totaling nearly \$2 million.

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WTH woman charged in Grabbe's murder

Ts NOV 9 1984

By John Halladay
Tribune-Star Staff Reporter

MARSHALL, Ill. — A West Terre Haute woman was charged Thursday with a 1981 Clark County murder in which the victim's body was incinerated.

The victim's estranged husband also was being sought Thursday for the crime.

Vickie McCallister, 28, 219 N. Ninth St., West Terre Haute, did not resist when she was arrested at her residence by Illinois and Indiana authorities late Wednesday.

She was booked into the Vigo County Jail at 12:25 a.m. Thursday for the 1981 murder of Charlotte Grabbe, 39. McCallister waived extradition to Illinois and was taken from the jail at 3:50 a.m. Thursday. She was being held without bond Thursday in the Clark County Jail.

Also being sought is Fred B. Grabbe, 45, Route 1, Marshall, the victim's estranged husband. Sheriff's deputies say they believe Fred Grabbe to be dangerous and possibly armed with a .38-caliber handgun.

Charlotte Grabbe disappeared July 24, 1981, from her rural Marshall farm.

Just two weeks before, she had

filed for divorce from Fred, her husband of nearly 19 years.

Grabbe's divorce request said her husband was "a man of uncontrollable temper" and that she felt her life would be in danger unless a court ordered her husband to stay away from her.

Fifth Judicial Circuit Judge Cas Bennett entered a temporary order when the divorce was filed July 10 barring Fred Grabbe from the family home.

Grabbe's divorce request said she should get her own property — consisting of \$90,000 which she inherited; the 190-acre farm, farm house and farm buildings; and unspecified other real estate she had exchanged for property willed to her. She also asked for "her just proportion" of the couple's common property, which she said included additional real estate, bank accounts, life-insurance policies, oil-drilling equipment and farm machinery.

Later court papers claim Fred Grabbe tried to talk his wife out of the divorce, but she refused.

Charlotte Grabbe disappeared July 24, 1981. She was last seen spraying beans in one of the farm fields.

A judicial order Aug. 21, 1981, said her husband could live in the house until she returned — but

each party was ordered not to sell any of the couple's property.

On Aug. 31, 1984, Fred Grabbe asked that the still-pending divorce proceedings be dismissed because his wife had never returned and could not present her case in court.

S. Craig Smith, the attorney who filed the original divorce papers, objected that Fred Grabbe should disprove the allegations — and, on Oct. 22, Judge Carl A. Lund said the divorce proceedings should be put on hold until Charlotte Grabbe either showed up or was declared legally dead.

Meanwhile, the investigation of Charlotte Grabbe's disappearance was continuing.

"A confidential source has advised authorities that Mrs. Grabbe was killed the day she disappeared and her body incinerated," David W. Lewis, Clark County state's attorney, said Thursday afternoon.

No information was revealed on how Grabbe was killed or where her body was incinerated.

A spokesperson for the state's attorney's office said McCallister and Fred Grabbe were believed to have been "girlfriend and boyfriend" at the time of the crime.

McCallister is expected to be brought to the Clark County Courthouse for initial proceedings sometime today in the case.

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Grabbe

Crime + Criminals (un)

Grabbe tried to influence story of drugs, man claims

JUN 13 1985

DANVILLE, Ill. — The final prosecution witness in the Fred B. Grabbe murder trial said the defendant tried to get him to give a false statement about marijuana use in a jail cell by the state's star witness.

Kenny Kintner, 20, formerly of Terre Haute and now serving time at the Graham Correctional Center near Hillsboro, was on the stand to conclude the prosecution's case against Grabbe by testifying Grabbe tried to get him to give a false statement about Vickie McCalister's drug use in the jail — an alleged perjury try that the prosecution says shows Grabbe's "consciousness of guilt" of the charge against him for strangling his wife July 24, 1981.

Kintner said Grabbe was ready to supply him with evidence against McCalister that Kintner (then a trusty at the jail) could say came from McCalister's cell: rolling papers were supposedly smuggled in to Grabbe inside a Sunday paper, and marijuana cigarette butts may have been passed in by a friend who brought Grabbe a notebook, according to Kintner's testimony.

Kintner also said he was worried that Indiana authorities might not go through with an agreement to let him serve three years from Indiana as part of his Oct. 15, 1984, plea of guilty to burglary that also brought him a three-year sentence. Grabbe claimed to know Vigo Circuit Judge Robert H. Brown "real well" and would get any problem fixed, Kintner said.

Brown, who is not involved in the

Grabbe trial, said during a separate interview Wednesday that he does know Grabbe from a legal matter about 20 years ago but that it's only a "Hi Fred — Hi Judge" thing.

"Fred has never talked to me about any pending case, and if he had, I'd throw him out of the office and he knows it."

Vigo County court records indicate proceedings against Kintner in Vigo Superior Court Division 1, not in Circuit Court.

Kintner denied Wednesday that he was told he would be able to serve his sentence in jail rather than a correctional center if he testified against Grabbe.

Daniel Ben Capps of Bloomington, another defense witness, on direct examination supported testimony by Bob DuVall, 22, of Route 2, Casey, that McCalister was nude in her cell. DuVall and Kintner "got kind of hyper over it" because they said McCalister was nude, Capps said.

Capps also said he smelled marijuana smoke. "It came from the other side of the jail ... there was only one person on the other side, and her name was Vickie," Capps said.

During cross-examination by David W. Lewis, Clark County state's attorney, Capps agreed at some points and disagreed at others when asked about an apparent conflicting interview he had before trial with a state investigator.

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TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA*Graham, Barbara*

Graham says Grabbe told her to spring him from Clark jail

Community Affairs File

J 5 AUG 29 1985

Crime & Criminals (CWS)

DANVILLE, Ill. — A Marshall woman arrested for allegedly trying to break convicted murderer Fred B. Grabbe out of the Clark County Jail July 7 has given authorities a statement implicating Grabbe — and possibly others — in the attempted jailbreak.

Barbara J. Graham, 26, is accused of firing five shots from a .38-caliber revolver during the attempt, wounding a Clark County sheriff's deputy in the leg. She is said by authorities to be a girlfriend of Grabbe's.

Graham is charged with one count of attempted murder and two counts of armed violence for wounding the deputy. Conviction on any of those counts could bring her a sentence of up to 30 years.

Grabbe, 46, was convicted June 24 of the July 24, 1981, strangulation of his estranged wife, Charlotte of Route 1, Marshall.

During a hearing Wednesday on what sentence to impose on Grabbe, Mervin Gillenwater of the Illinois Division of Criminal Investigation said Graham gave the

statement July 11.

Grabbe on July 2 told her he wanted her to break him out of jail "so they could be together," Gillenwater said Graham told him and others.

Grabbe said he would provide a weapon and \$2,000 cash; Graham said she received the money, a revolver and two boxes of ammunition, the investigator related.

A full report of the interview was not released, but 5th Judicial Circuit Judge Paul Komada reviewed the report and said it indicated "other individuals involved."

The roles allegedly played by the individuals were not made clear. According to testimony about the report, Graham said she went to the West Union home of Joe Hilbert, a defense witness during the trial earlier this summer, and got a gun off a kitchen table when Hilbert was not there.

Graham also said she was told there would be an airplane waiting at a small airstrip near Palestine,

Crawford County and that an illegitimate daughter of Grabbe's and her husband had an airplane.

Gillenwater said Graham told him that Grabbe at one point told his mother to provide a vehicle, some clothing and food because "he was to be getting out."

Lewis said during the court session that a Clark County grand jury likely will be asked to look into matters surrounding the alleged jailbreak try. The state's attorney declined to say what, if anything, Graham was offered in return for the interview covered in Gillenwater's report.

Komada said testimony about the alleged attempt would be "very damning" if he took it into consideration while deciding what sentence to impose — but the judge said he would set the testimony aside for sentencing purposes.

He did not say when the grand jury probe might begin.

— John Halladay

Grabbe, Fred

Mistrial declared in Grabbe trial

By Kimberly McAllister

Tribune-Star Correspondent

OCT 08 1987

MARSHALL, Ill. — A mistrial was declared Wednesday in the jailbreak trial of accused murderer Fred Grabbe after the defendant blurted out a statement considered to be inadmissible.

Special Judge Ralph Pearman declared the mistrial during the fifth day of testimony after special co-counselor Matthew Schneider questioned Grabbe about a phone conversation he had with former girlfriend Barbara Graham on the morning of July 5, 1985.

Grabbe is accused of instructing Graham, 28, of Marshall, through numerous letters and phone calls, to break him out of the Clark County Jail on July 7, 1985.

Graham pleaded guilty but mentally ill on

April 3, 1986, to one count of armed violence for the alleged attempt to free Grabbe. She is currently serving a 16-year sentence.

Graham, the state's key witness, said Grabbe told her through letters and phone calls to pick up various items to aid him in his breakout and subsequent flight out of the state.

Those items included between \$1,500 and \$2,000 in cash that Graham has said Grabbe told her to pick up from the kitchen table at Joe Hilbert's home in West Union, Ill.

Schneider asked Grabbe Wednesday if Graham told him in the July 5, 1985, phone conversation that the money was not on Hilbert's kitchen table.

"That showed she was lying on the polygraph," Grabbe said.

Graham took a polygraph test about the attempted jail break on July 11, 1985, at the Clark County Jail.

During earlier testimony, Grabbe mentioned

some of the statements made by Graham in the test, but was admonished by Judge Pearman to refrain from doing so because such tests are considered unreliable and therefore inadmissible in testimony.

After a recess that lasted more than one hour, Pearman returned and called the jury back.

"In my 16 years at the bench, I have never been put in this position before," he began.

He then read Schneider's question to Grabbe about the money at Hilbert's house and Grabbe's answer, repeated his earlier statement that polygraph tests are not admissible evidence and designated Grabbe's "voluntary" statement as having a great impact on the state's — and Grabbe's — case.

"It is my determination that due to this act of the defendant, himself, that both sides can not receive a fair trial. It is with great regret that I've now granted a motion for a mistrial, based on this act," Pearman said.

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Grabbe, Fred

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Grabbe hears not-guilty verdicts

By Jody Ferris
Tribune-Star Correspondent

Crime and Criminals (CIV)
T s DEC 1 0 1987

MARSHALL, Ill. — Fred Grabbe, 48, of Marshall, on trial for conspiracy to escape, armed violence and aggravated battery, was found innocent of all three charges Wednesday.

The charges were in connection with a jailbreak attempt from the Clark County Jail on July 7, 1985, staged by Grabbe's former girlfriend, Barbara Graham. At the time, Grabbe was awaiting sentencing for the 1981 murder of his wife, Charlotte.

Graham, the chief prosecution witness

against Grabbe, is serving a 16-year prison term for armed violence.

The verdict was reached at 8:18 p.m. after the jury deliberated for several hours. Closing arguments by both attorneys lasted most of the morning with Judge Ralph Pearman's instructions to the jury of six men and six women at 12:30 p.m.

Following the verdict, Grabbe turned and embraced defense attorneys Frederick Cohn and Larry Jones and a nephew who had attended the entire trial.

The nephew reported later that Grabbe told him, "Jim, it's over."

After the verdict was announced, Cohn said:

"We had faith in the jurors of this county. That opinion has been demonstrated to be true. Barbara Graham was shown to be an unbelievable witness and, in the next trial, Vickie McCalister will be just as unbelievable. Fred is elated."

Clark County State's Attorney David Lewis, who assisted Illinois assistant attorney general Matthew Schneider in prosecuting the case, said: "The defense was successful in directing attention away from the letters Grabbe had written. The verdict does not affect plans for Grabbe's murder trial, which will take place after the first of the year, most likely here in Marshall."

Grabbe, Fred B.

Top witness McCalister on stand in Grabbe retrial

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Crime and Criminals (law)
MAR 31 1988
By John Halladay
Tribune-Star Staff Reporter

MARSHALL, Ill. — The prosecution led with its highest card as testimony began Wednesday in the murder retrial of Fred B. Grabbe.

Grabbe, 48, was convicted June 24, 1985, of the July 24, 1981, strangulation of his estranged wife Charlotte, 39, of Route 1, Marshall.

He was sentenced by Judge Paul Komada to life without parole.

The 4th District Appellate Court ruled on Sept. 15, 1986, that Grabbe should get a new trial because Komada made several errors in the trial — including not telling jurors that former Grabbe girlfriend Vickie McCalister could have been charged as an accomplice in the murder and that her testimony should be considered with caution and suspicion because of a deal she made with prosecutors in exchange for being a witness.

The Appellate Court also said Komada should have given the jurors specific instructions on how to consider McCalister's testimony that Grabbe told her of other murders as she and he waited for most of Charlotte's body to be burned by a fire in a metal barrel over a period of two nights.

McCalister — who says she saw Fred Grabbe strangle Charlotte to death — was the first prosecution witness called to the stand Wednesday.

She has claimed Grabbe tried to sodomize his wife's corpse and pumped grease into the body so it would burn better.

In a Nov. 8, 1984, statement, she was asked by Michael Geurin of the Illinois Division of Criminal Investigation, "Did you help burn her?"

"No," McCalister said, "He liked doing that. I watched it."

"What do you mean, he liked doing that?" Geurin asked.

"I don't know. He got a kick out of it. I don't know," McCalister said.

In his opening statement Wednesday, Bob Egan (one of the assistant Illinois attorneys-general helping Clark County State's Attorney David W. Lewis prosecute the case) told jurors testimony would show Grabbe "tended the fire and stoked it and fed it" until nearly all his wife's body was consumed, and the remains were dumped into the Wabash River.

He said McCalister did not come forward immediately because she was afraid of Grabbe, "and I will tell you frankly that she went to police in response to a reward," which she still expects to receive.

Frederick F. Cohn (defending Grabbe, along with Larry Jones) said in his opening statement that Grabbe will testify he does not know what happened to his wife.

The defense in the first Grabbe trial said Charlotte was not really dead and theorized that she had run off voluntarily.

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Crim. and Criminals (W.D.) - Grabbe

Vicki Community Affairs File recalls killing

TS JAN 15 1985

By John Halladay
Tribune-Star Staff Reporter

MARSHALL, Ill. — "It seemed like forever, but I guess it was about five minutes or so" as Fred B. Grabbe choked his wife to death, according to a statement by Vickie McCalister, the state's star witness.

Grabbe, 45, is accused of strangling his estranged wife, Charlotte, 39, on July 24, 1981.

McCalister, 28, 219 N. Ninth St., West Terre Haute, fingered Fred Grabbe as the murderer in a statement Nov. 8, 1984, to Michael Geurin and Larry Coughlin, both Illinois state investigators.

In the statement, McCalister tells of going to a field where Charlotte had been operating a tractor. McCalister said she hid inside a shed behind a piece of equipment at Fred's instruction. Then Charlotte came to the shed.

"I heard them [Fred and Charolette] up there talking, but I couldn't quite make it out, but it didn't last very long, and then I stayed behind the piece of equipment for a couple more minutes, and then I went outside, and when I went outside to where they was at, he had her on the ground and was strangling her.

"He strangled her to death," McCalister said.

McCalister then talked extensively about how she drove Charlotte's car, following Fred's pickup truck with Charlotte's body in a barrel in the back, to Terre Haute, where the car was abandoned.

McCalister then said she got in the truck with Fred, who drove first to her trailer near Rosedale, where Fred removed Charlotte's clothes. The body was then taken to a location "Out in the boonies. I don't know exact address."

At that location and another, "down by South Lake, by the [Wabash] river," Charlotte's re-



VICKIE McCALISTER
Tells grisly tale

mains were mostly incinerated, McCalister said.

She said Fred examined his dead wife's skull.

The skull and the barrel went into the river, McCalister said.

Other remains were placed in a smaller barrel, then taken to a cabin, and then close to the river, where the incineration continued during a second night and the remains and smaller barrel also were thrown in the river, McCalister said.

McCalister said Fred Grabbe told her three or four times "That if I said anything to anybody, that I would end up missing like Charlotte did."

"Why did he — is there some reason he was concerned about everything burning up?" Coughlin asked.

"Yes. He said that she had had some kind of feet surgery or something, and he didn't want anybody to be able to detect it," McCalister said.

Coughlin asked, "Did Fred tell you why he killed her?"

"She was just giving him a bunch of trouble. I don't know exactly all the details. Mostly over money and the divorce going through," McCalister said.

Grabbe's defense attorneys have said McCalister's statement is a lie made up in hopes of getting a \$20,000 reward.

The prosecution says the unusual — perhaps even unlikely — elements in it tend to substantiate the statement. If a person were going to make up a story, it would be cleaner and more simple, David W. Lewis, Clark County state's attorney, said.

Grabbe, Fred

Vigo County Public Library

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Grabbe guilty — again

Defense team stunned by jury's verdict

By John Halladay *Ts* APR 13 1988
Tribune-Star Staff Reporter

MARSHALL, Ill. — Fred B. Grabbe was convicted for the second time Tuesday of strangling his estranged wife, Charlotte.

Grabbe showed no emotion other than to shake his head at one point, but defense attorney Frederick F. Cohn said Grabbe told him during a private discussion after the verdict, "It's hard to believe how an innocent man can be convicted."

Curious local residents came out of businesses in the courthouse area to watch Grabbe leave, and a media mob scene developed as Grabbe was leaving the courthouse.

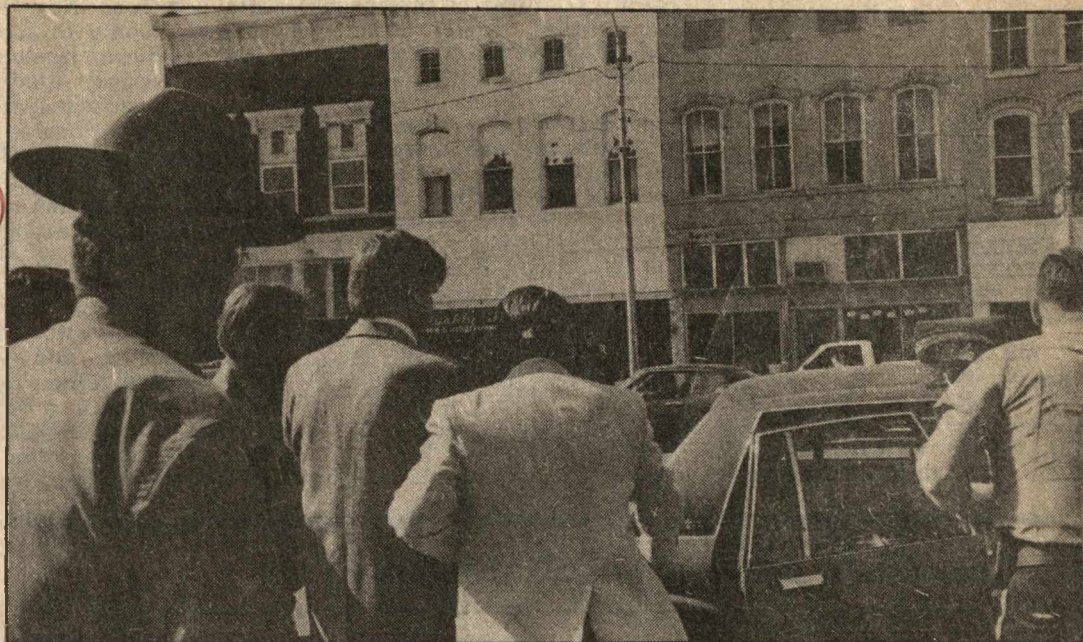
Cameras were not permitted by Judge Robert Steigmann on the second floor of the building where the trial was conducted, and reporters and photographers waiting on the ground floor were taken by surprise, as Grabbe and escorting lawmen went out the north door rather than the south door.

Post-trial motions will be heard and, if denied, sentencing for Grabbe is set for June 3 in Coles County, Steigmann said.

Prosecutors said Grabbe strangled Charlotte, 39, of Route 1, Marshall, on July 24, 1981, then burned most of her body in a metal barrel and dumped the remains in the Wabash River.

Grabbe, 48, was first convicted June 24, 1985, and sentenced by Judge Paul Komada to life without parole. But the 4th District Appellate Court ruled on Sept. 15, 1986, that Grabbe should get a new trial because Komada made several errors in the trial.

Cohn said there will be another appeal. But Matthew Schneider, one of the Illinois assistant



Tribune-Star/John Halladay

Back to jail: Fred Grabbe, flanked by police, is escorted from courthouse.

attorneys general helping prosecute Grabbe, said a second appeal will fail because the trial record this time is "squeaky clean."

He said the second conviction shows beyond any doubt that Grabbe is guilty, and, "Mr. Grabbe's in jail to stay."

David Lewis, Clark County state's attorney, says he will ask for another life sentence for Grabbe because of the heinous nature of the crime.

Cohn said he will ask for a lighter sentence. "If he did what Vickie McCalister" — the state's star witness and a former Grabbe girlfriend — "says he did, then this is a crime of passion," Cohn said.

Lewis said McCalister was an essential witness but that other witnesses who provided supporting details also were essential.

He said he was "glad to have this case

resolved, finally."

Lewis said he had no idea what the ultimate dollar cost of the second trial will be other than that it will be "significant."

Jurors got the case for deliberation at 5:22 p.m. Monday and adjourned for the night about 11 p.m. after reporting, "We are not close to reaching an agreement" in response to a note Steigmann sent into the jury room.

After spending the night in Terre Haute, jurors returned to the courtroom about 10 a.m. Tuesday and reached their verdict about 2:15 p.m.

Uniformed Illinois state troopers, secretary of state's police, Clark County sheriff's deputies, and Marshall city police were present in the courtroom as Steigmann gaveled court to order at 3:15 p.m. and cautioned spectators against any outbursts.

Community Affairs File

Death not connected to retrial

Crime and Criminals (CIV) - Murder

Is JUN 07 1988

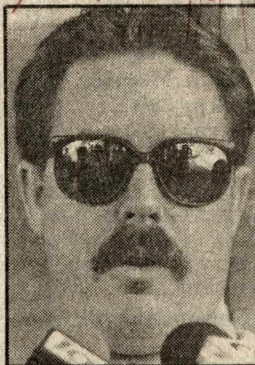
MARSHALL, Ill. — California investigators said Tuesday afternoon that the February shooting death of 29-year-old Jeffrey L. Grabbe apparently had nothing to do with his role as a prospective key witness in the retrial of his father, Fred B. Grabbe, who was convicted in April of murdering his estranged wife, Charlotte, in 1981.

"We're convinced at this point that this [Grabbe murder] has nothing to do with Fred Grabbe's retrial," said detective Raul Ahumada of the Seal Beach, Calif., police department.

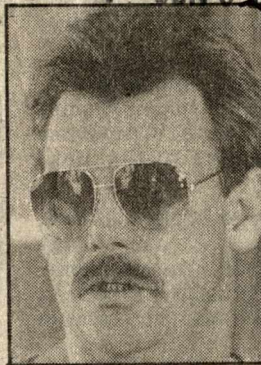
During Fred Grabbe's first murder trial in 1985, his son testified against his father and told of the marital discord that existed between his parents before his mother disappeared.

Fred Grabbe was convicted in 1985 of murdering his wife, but an appeals court threw out the conviction and ordered a new trial.

The second trial was conducted in Clark County Circuit Court in April. A jury again convicted Grabbe and he is in the Coles County Jail in Charleston, Ill., awaiting his Aug. 8 sentencing.



AHUMADA



HARDIN

Detectives said further investigation into Jeffrey Grabbe's killing will be centered in southern California, where the man had been for two weeks before disappearing around Feb. 28.

Ahumada and fellow detective Darrell Hardin spent Tuesday and Wednesday talking with

Grabbe family members and "trying to find out as much about Jeff Grabbe's life as we could," they said.

"We've determined that his activities here had nothing to do with his activities in California," Ahumada said.

No motive has been established, Ahumada said, but robbery has been ruled out. He said police are studying Grabbe's business deals in hopes of uncovering a motive and suspects.

"Someone went through a whole lot of trouble to make sure Jeff Grabbe died and that his body would never be found," Ahumada said.

The Seal Beach detectives traveled to the Coles County Jail and talked with Fred Grabbe and his attorney early Tuesday. They said Grabbe had already heard of his son's death on a television newscast and that he appeared "upset."

Ahumada said Grabbe gave them much background into his son's life, but told them he had not had any contact with him in four years.

— Max Jones

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Murders / Grabbe, Jeff

Four tied to Grabbe's death in money scam

Crime and Criminal (CWS) - Murders

SEAL BEACH, Calif. — Four people have been linked to the death of 29-year-old Jeff Grabbe of Marshall, Ill., a murder police detectives say occurred because Grabbe double-crossed his accomplices in a financial scam.

Seal Beach Detective Darrell Hardin said two of the suspects have been in custody on theft and drug charges unrelated to Grabbe's death.

Hardin declined to identify the suspects in custody or to say where they're being held, but he did say he expected the Orange County District Attorney's office to file charges in about one month.

Detective Charlie Castagna said the suspects were not arrested and were not being held in Seal Beach. All were from Southern California and the arrests were made in Southern California.

Hardin also declined to name the two individuals who have been tied to the homicide, saying only that they're cooperating with Seal Beach detectives.

Hardin said the motive in the Grabbe killing appears to stem from a falling out in an alleged scam involving the laundering of \$7 million in forged and stolen bank notes, money orders and

counterfeit money.

"Jeff had some property of the others. He got too greedy," Hardin told a Southern California newspaper.

Two men in jail will probably be charged with murder, while the other two could face charges of accessory to murder.

"We got the information through the other parties in the crime," Hardin said. "They told us how, where and when it happened. They have told us why it happened."

Grabbe was reported missing in early March by his family in Marshall. He was found dead March 22 floating in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of Southern California. He had been shot three times, twice in the head and once in the chest.

Grabbe's body, which was faceless and decomposed when pulled from the ocean, was not identified until early June. Police said at the time they did not believe the disappearance and death were related to the April retrial of his father, Fred Grabbe, on charges of murdering his wife.

Fred Grabbe was convicted on the murder charge and is serving a life sentence in the Illinois prison system.

Vigo County Public Library

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EX-TROOPER WANTED FOR MURDER CAUGHT

By **Michael Connelly, Staff Writer**
SUN-SENTINEL

APRIL 23, 1985 | FORT LAUDERDALE

A former Indiana state trooper sought for a year in a shooting in Terre Haute that left his ex-wife injured and her boyfriend dead was arrested by FBI agents this morning at a downtown construction site near the FBI office, agents said.

Jerry W. Cliver, 31, who was using the name James Zoller, was arrested without incident as he reported for work about 8 a.m. at the site near Northeast Third Avenue and First Street.

"We had been looking for him in Fort Lauderdale area since February and as it turned out we didn't have to go far. He was arrested right next door," said FBI agent Martin K. Rikken.

Cliver, the only Indiana state trooper ever charged with murder, had been sought since March 23, 1984, in the death of Donald Clayton and the attempted murder of his ex-wife, Jerri Lynn Cliver, who survived the shooting in Sullivan County.

In the weeks after the shooting the weapon used was found near railroad tracks in Evansville, Ind., and Cliver's car was found in Atlanta, officials said.

From there the trail grew cold until Feb. 8, when a man using the name James Zoller was stopped in Sunrise for a traffic violation and charged with having a stolen license plate. Though the man posted \$125 bail and left jail the day he was arrested, his fingerprints were later matched with Cliver's at the FBI headquarters in Washington, officials said.

"The address he gave during the arrest was bad but we were able to develop information about where he had been working," said Rikken. "He wasn't working (at the construction site) any more but was expected to start again today. When he showed up, he was arrested."

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